AMENDMENT
Serial No. 10/612,079
Docket No. ORW01-GN003

REMARKS

Introductory Comments

Claims 1-105 are pending in the present application. Claims 1-76 and 105 were elected without traverse, while claims 77-104 have been withdrawn. Claims 1, 7, 8, 10, 17, 23, 29, 30, 41, 47, 48, 50, 57, 63, 67, 68, and 105 have been amended. Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

Instant Office Action – 35 U.S.C. § 102 Rejections

Claims 1, 5, 7-14, 17, 20, 41, 45-54, 57, 58 and 60 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,458,653 to Davidson ("Davidson"). This ground of rejection is respectfully traversed.

Specifically, to anticipate Applicant's claimed invention, Davidson must disclose each and every one of the limitations at issue. M.P.E.P. § 2131 provides in relevant part:

> "A claim is anticipated only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference." *Verdegaal Bros. v. Union Oil Co. of California*, 814 F.2d 628, 631 (Fed. Cir. 1987). "The identical invention must be shown in as complete detail as is contained in the ... claim." *Richardson v. Suzuki Motor Co.*, 868 F.2d 1226, 1236 (Fed. Cir. 1989). The elements must be arranged as required by the claim. *In re Bond*, 910 F.2d 831 (Fed. Cir. 1990).

As will be discussed hereafter, Dividson fails to qualify as an anticipatory reference and thus the grounds of rejection should be withdrawn.

Claim 1, one of the two independent claims rejected in view of Davidson, is directed to a prosthetic stabilizing device for use with a knee replacement prosthesis that includes a tibial component to be mounted to a patient's tibia and a femoral component to be mounted to the patient's femur, where the tibial component interfaces with the femoral component to simulate the biomechanics of a knee joint, the stabilizing device comprising a lining to be mounted to at least one of a tibial component of a knee replacement prosthesis and a femoral component of the knee replacement prosthesis so that the lining is between the tibial component and the femoral component approximate a

prosthetic intercondylar channel of the femoral component to supplement periarticular stability between the tibial component and the femoral component, the lining being comprised of a lining material selected from the group consisting of a biologic material, a biologically reabsorbable material, and a combination of biologic and biologically reabsorbable materials.

Davidson, in contrast, discloses prostheses having bioabsorbable coatings on only those portions of the prostheses coming into contact with bone. The distinction between bioabsorbables in contact with native tissue, including bone, versus foreign materials, including prostheses, is important. Bioabsorbables in direct contact with native tissue are converted to native tissue, while bioabsorbables not in direct contact with native tissue are simply absorbed by the host with no residual native tissue conversion. Davidson discloses bioabsorbable coatings between a prosthesis and native tissue (such as bone). Moreover, Davidson specifically notes that the bioabsorbable material is replaced by bone ingrowth. See Col. 5, line 65 – Col. 6, line 8. However, Applicant has been unable to locate a specific disclosure in Davidson indicating that the bioabsorbable material was positioned between prosthetic components.

In light of this absence, it is impermissible to assert that Davidson discloses each of the limitations of Applicant's claims, specifically claims 1 and 41 that recite a bioabsorbable material that "is between the tibial component and the femoral component." Thus, it has been shown that Davidson does not disclose each and every one of the limitations of at least claim 1 and claim 41, as well as those claims that depend therefrom. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) rejections of record over Davidson for claims 1, 5, 7-14, 17, 20, 41, 45-54, 57, 58 and 60 are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-3, 5-6, 7-15, 17, 20, 23-25, 27-28, 29-34, and 38 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,113,640 to Tormala et al. ("Tormala"). This ground of rejection is respectfully traversed. Specifically, Tormala fails to disclose each and every one of the limitations at issue.

As previously recited, claim 1 is directed to a prosthetic stabilizing device for use with a knee replacement prosthesis that includes a stabilizing device comprising a lining to be mounted to at least one of a tibial component of a knee replacement prosthesis and a femoral component of the knee replacement prosthesis so that the lining is between the tibial component and the femoral component approximate a prosthetic intercondylar channel of the femoral component to supplement periarticular stability between the tibial component and the femoral component. Tormala does not disclose at least these features.

Tormala, in contrast, discloses bioabsorbable joint spacers between bone. As discussed previously, when bioabsorbables are contacted by native tissue, such as bone, the bioabsorbables are converted to native tissue. Specifically, Tormala recites:

> When located in a joint cavity, the joint spacer of the present invention will be covered and/or filled relatively rapidly with connective tissue. During that biodegradation process, the joint spacer is replaced by a biological, fibrous tissue. As a result, a new, biological, elastic fibrous tissue joint is obtained.

(Col. 4, lines 56-61 of Tomala). Moreover, Tomala discloses that the fasteners to retain the bioabsorbable materials in place are themselves bioabsorbable materials. See Col. 6, lines 5-30. In each case, Tomala discloses that the bioabsorbable materials are converted to native connective tissue surrounding the joint so that "it is possible to bend the bones to be joined in relation to each other." (Col. 6, ll. 2-4). Applicant, however, has been unable to locate a specific disclosure in Tomala indicating that the bioabsorbable material was positioned between prosthetic components.

In light of this absence, it is impermissible to assert that Tomala discloses each of the limitations of Applicant's claims, specifically claim 1, that recite a bioabsorbable material that "is between the tibial component and the femoral component." Thus, it has been shown that Tomala does not disclose each and every one of the limitations of at least claim 1 and those claims that depend therefrom. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) rejections of record over Tormala for claims 1-3, 5-6, 7-15, 17, 20, 23-25, 27-28, 29-34, and 38 are respectfully requested.

Claim 105 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,790,853 to Engelbrecht et al. ("Engelbrecht"). This ground of rejection is respectfully traversed. Specifically, Engelbrecht fails to disclose each and every one of the limitations at issue.

Claim 105 is directed to a knee prosthesis comprising: (a) a tibial component to be mounted to a patient's tibia; (b) a femoral component to be mounted to a patient's femur, and to be pivotally coupled to the tibial component to form a prosthetic knee joint; and (c) a lining being selectively attachable to at least one of the tibial component and the femoral component in the prosthetic knee joint so that the lining is mounted between the tibial component and the femoral component approximate a prosthetic intercondylar channel of the femoral component to supplement periarticular stability between the tibial component and the femoral component, whereby repositioning or degradation of the liner does not appreciably hinder the functionality of the femoral component and the tibial component. Engelbrecht does not disclose such a device.

Engelbrecht, in contrast, discloses a synthetic plastic liner that if degraded, would hinder the functionality of the joint. Specifically, Engelbrecht discloses that the liner 40 acts as a necessary bushing between the male guide 14 and the female guide 10. If this liner 40 is repositioned or degraded, play is introduced to the joint that would necessarily hinder the functionality associated with the components. This is precisely the reason Engelbrecht at Col. 6, ll. 23-26 references its parent patent, U.S. Patent No. 4,538,305, which confirms the same to be true.

> A sheath or sleeve-like member 18 composed of a synthetic plastic material is fixedly mounted in the recess 20 as illustrated in FIGS. 1-4. The recess 20 is sufficiently deep to provide good support for the sheath 18. With reference to FIG. 9, it may be seen that the sheath 18 is generally cylindrical but has a hemispherical end 21. The hemispherical end 21 of the sheath 18 conforms to and engages the hemispherical end 22 of the recess 20.
>
> As illustrated in FIGS. 1-4, the projection 13 which, as mentioned earlier, is normal to the upper surface 6 of the platform 4, extends into the sheath 18. The sheath 18 uniformly engages the entire projection 13 including the hemispherical free end of the latter which conforms to the hemispherical end 21 of the sheath 18. The sheath 18 *functions as a*

> *bushing which permits the projection 13 and the hinge pin 19 to rotate relative to one another* about the longitudinal axis of the projection 13.

(Col. 5, ll. 37-54 of U.S. Patent No. 4,538,305, emphasis added). In other words, degradation of the bushing would degrade or inhibit rotation between the prosthetic components. Applicant has been unable to locate a specific disclosure in Engelbrecht indicating that the liner 40 is optional or somehow superfluous. In direct contrast, Engelbrecht discloses that the material comprising the liner 40 may be fabricated from the same material as the mounting member 18, which is not intended to readily degrade.

In light of the clear differences between the structure disclosed in Engelbrecht and Applicant's claim 105, it is impermissible to assert that Engelbrecht discloses each of the limitations of Applicant's claim 105 that recites a structure where "repositioning or degradation of the liner does not appreciably hinder the functionality of the femoral component and the tibial component." Thus, it has been shown that Engelbrecht does not disclose each and every one of the limitations of claim 105. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) rejection of record over Engelbrecht for claim 105 are respectfully requested.

35 U.S.C. § 103 Rejections

Claims 15-16, 18-19, 21-22, 55-56, 58-59, and 61-62 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being obvious over U.S. Patent No. 5,458,653 to Davidson ("Davidson") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,616,698 to Scarborough ("Scarborough"). This ground of rejection is respectfully traversed. Specifically, neither Davidson nor Scarborough, individually or in combination, disclose each and every one of the limitations at issue.

To render obvious claims 15-16, 18-19, 21-22, 55-56, 58-59, and 61-62, Davidson and Scarborough must: (1) provide some suggestion or motivation, either in the reference itself or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to modify the reference; (2) provide a reasonable expectation of success; and (3) teach or suggest all the claim limitations. M.P.E.P. § 2143. The Office action fails to meet at least two of

these requirements with respect to the allegation that Applicant's claims 15-16, 18-19, 21-22, 55-56, 58-59, and 61-62 are obvious in light of Davidson in view of Scarborough.

First, the alleged combination of Davidson with Scarborough fails to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness because the combination of these references fails to disclose each and every one of the limitations of claims 15-16, 18-19, 21-22, 55-56, 58-59, and 61-62. M.P.E.P. § 2143.03 provides in relevant part:

> To establish *prima facie* obviousness of a claimed invention, all the claim limitations must be taught or suggested by the prior art. *In re Royka*, 490 F.2d 981 (C.C.P.A. 1974). "All words in a claim must be considered in judging the patentability of that claim against the prior art." *In re Wilson*, 424 F.2d 1382, 1385 (C.C.P.A. 1970).

As discussed previously, Davidson at least fails to disclose a lining positioned between two prosthetic components, where the lining consists of a biologic material, a biologically reabsorbable material, and a combination of biologic and biologically reabsorbable materials. Scarborough also fails to disclose this limitation. Thus, on this ground alone, the rejection of claims 15-16, 18-19, 21-22, 55-56, 58-59, and 61-62 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Davidson combined with Scarborough is untenable.

Second, the prior art method of operation contradicts the alleged suggestion or motivation to modify either Davidson or Scarborough. M.P.E.P. § 2143.02 provides in relevant part:

> If the proposed modification or combination of the prior art would change the principle of operation of the prior art invention being modified, then the teachings of the references are not sufficient to render the claims *prima facie* obvious. *In re Ratti*, 270 F.2d 810 (C.C.P.A. 1959).

The Office action alleges on page 3 that the motivation to combine Davidson with Scarborough is:

> [I]t would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have used an antibiotic such as gentamicin and osteogenic materials such as stem cells and transforming growth factor in the Davidson implant, since it was well known to use these materials for

> their intended purpose, namely, *promoting bone growth* and prevention of infection. (emphasis added)

But Davidson does not want to promote bone growth; just the opposite, Davidson wants to retard bone growth. See Col. 2, ll. 59-62 ("The invention prostheses comprise a bioabsorbable coating that covers that portion of the implant which is in contact with the bone area where bone fixation is to be initially retarded."). Scarborough, on the other hand, wants to promote bone growth. The recited rationale for combining the references is conclusively rebutted by the very disclosures of Davidson and Scarborough, one wanting to promote prompt bone growth, while the other wants to retard bone growth. Thus, on this ground alone, the rejection of claims 15-16, 18-19, 21-22, 55-56, 58-59, and 61-62 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is untenable.

Finally, a reasonable expectation of success is clearly absent, particularly in light of the contrary purpose of Davidson (retard bone growth) versus Scarborough (facilitate quick bone growth). In fact, Davidson specifically contrasts the prior art which provides quick bone growth, which Scarborough discloses, in his Field of the Invention section:

> The present invention relates to prosthetic devices, including hip joint stems and knee joint fixation posts, and more particularly to prosthetic devices that are coated or covered by a bioabsorbable material to provide selective stress shielding of or attachment by the adjacent bone while the implant is healing into place.

Davidson indicates that good support and stability are facilitated by "not allowing direct bonding with the bone until a later time" (Col. 3, ll.1-2). It is clear that quick bone growth advocated by Scarborough would completely frustrate the express purpose recited in Davidson. Moreover, each reference advocates conversion of the bioabsorbable material to bone tissue, something not advantageous in between prosthetic components of a functioning joint as recited in Applicant's claims. Thus, no reasonable expectation of success is present. On this ground alone, the rejection of claims 15-16, 18-19, 21-22, 55-56, 58-59, and 61-62 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is untenable. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejections of record for claims 15-16, 18-19, 21-22, 55-56, 58-59, and 61-62 are respectfully requested.

Claims 16, 18-19, 21-22, 35-37, 39 and 40 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being obvious over U.S. Patent No. 6,113,640 to Tormala et al. ("Tormala") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,616,698 to Scarborough ("Scarborough"). This ground of rejection is respectfully traversed. Specifically, neither Tormala nor Scarborough, individually or in combination, disclose each and every one of the limitations at issue.

To render obvious claims 16, 18-19, 21-22, 35-37, 39 and 40, Tormala and Scarborough must: (1) provide some suggestion or motivation, either in the reference itself or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to modify the reference; (2) provide a reasonable expectation of success; and (3) teach or suggest all the claim limitations. M.P.E.P. § 2143. The Office action fails to meet at least two of these requirements with respect to the allegation that Applicant's claims 16, 18-19, 21-22, 35-37, 39 and 40 are obvious in light of Tormala in view of Scarborough.

First, the alleged combination of Tormala with Scarborough fails to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness because the combination of these references fails to disclose each and every one of the limitations of claims 16, 18-19, 21-22, 35-37, 39 and 40. As discussed previously, Tormala fails to disclose a prosthetic stabilizing device for use with a knee replacement prosthesis that includes a stabilizing device comprising a lining to be mounted to at least one of a tibial component of a knee replacement prosthesis and a femoral component of the knee replacement prosthesis so that the lining is between the tibial component and the femoral component approximate a prosthetic intercondylar channel of the femoral component to supplement periarticular stability between the tibial component and the femoral component. Scarborough also fails to disclose this limitation. Thus, on this ground alone, the rejection of claims 16, 18-19, 21-22, 35-37, 39 and 40 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Tormala combined with Scarborough is untenable.

Second, Tormala teaches away from Applicant's claimed invention. M.P.E.P. § 2144.05 provides in relevant part, "[a] prima facie case of obviousness may also be rebutted by showing that the art, *in any material respect*, teaches away from the claimed

invention." *In re Geisler*, 116 F.3d 1465, 1471 (Fed. Cir. 1997) (emphasis added). Tormala specifically contrasts artificial prostheses by stating:

> As the new joint is formed during the degradation process of the joint spacer, no foreign particles are released that are chronically harmful to the patient's system, as can be the case with the so-called biostable joint prostheses. Thus, the joint spacer of the present invention entirely eliminates the risks of such chronic complications caused by loose foreign particles which are possible when using biostable joint prostheses. (emphasis added)

See Col. 4, l. 62 – Col. 5, l. 2. Tormala is indicating that his invention is directed to replacement of joints using native tissue regrowth, as opposed to artificial joint component replacement. Tormala alleges that artificial joint component replacement, which is the field of Applicant's invention, suffers from unwanted "foreign particles [that] are released [and] are chronically harmful to the patient's system." In this manner, Tormala is clearly teaching away from artificial joint component replacement, which is the antithesis of the art suggesting Applicant's claimed invention. See *In re Fine*, 873 F.2d 1071 (Fed. Cir. 1988). Thus, on this ground alone, the rejection of claims 16, 18-19, 21-22, 35-37, 39 and 40 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is untenable.

Finally, there is no reasonable expectation of success by combining Tormala with Scarborough. One of ordinary skill following the disclosure of Tormala, where the reabsorbable materials are utilized to facilitate tissue regrowth within the spacer in place of the reabsorbable materials, has no reason to think that bioabsorbables in artificial joint replacements is advantageous. Specifically, Tormala discloses placement of bioabsorbables contacting bone that will be eventually converted to bone. This is in direct contrast to Applicant's claimed invention where tissue regrowth in place of the reabsorbable materials would be undesirable. No disclosure has been cited in the Office action for the proposition of using absorbable linings between prosthetic components, other than Applicant's own disclosure, which is impermissible. See *Interconnect Planning Corporation v. Feil*, 774 F.2d 1132, 1143 (Fed. Cir. 1985). Thus, there is no basis to assert a reasonable expectation of success. On this ground alone, the rejection of claims 16, 18-19, 21-22, 35-37, 39 and 40 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is untenable.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejections of record for claims 16, 18-19, 21-22, 35-37, 39 and 40 are respectfully requested.

Claims 4 and 26 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being obvious over U.S. Patent No. 6,113,640 to Tormala et al. ("Tormala") in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0173852 to Felt et al. ("Felt"). This ground of rejection is respectfully traversed.

As discussed extensively, Tormala does not disclose each and every one of the limitations of Applicant's claims except for fasteners, in contrast to the conclusions drawn in the Office action. Also previously discussed, Tormala teaches away from Applicant's claims and fails to provide a reasonable expectation of success. In view of these reasoned conclusions concerning Tormala set forth by Applicant, Felt is ineffective to cure the first deficiency and could not cure the second and third deficiencies of Tormala. In light of the foregoing, the rejections of claims 4 and 26 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is untenable. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejections of record for claims 4 and 26 are respectfully requested.

Claims 63 and 65-76 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being obvious over U.S. Patent Reissue No. 29,757 to Helfet ("Helfet") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,759,205 to Valentini ("Valentini"). This ground of rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 63 is directed to a knee prosthesis comprising: (a) a femoral component to be mounted to a patient's femur; (b) a tibial component to be mounted to the patient's tibia, the tibial component including a stabilizing post at its proximal end to be received within a prosthetic intercondylar channel of the femoral component to form a prosthetic hinge-type joint coupling; and (c) a lining mounted to at least one of the stabilizing post and an inner surface of the femoral component at least partially defining the prosthetic intercondylar channel to, at least temporarily, supplement periarticular stability between the stabilizing post and the prosthetic intercondylar channel, the lining being comprised of a lining material selected from the group consisting of a biologic material, a

biologically reabsorbable material, and a combination of biologic and biologically reabsorbable materials.

To render obvious claims 63 and 65-76, Helfet and Valentini must: (1) provide some suggestion or motivation, either in the reference itself or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to modify the reference; (2) provide a reasonable expectation of success; and (3) teach or suggest all the claim limitations. M.P.E.P. § 2143. The Office action fails to meet at least two of these requirements with respect to the allegation that Applicant's claims 63 and 65-76 are obvious in light of Helfet in view of Valentini.

First, the alleged combination of Helfet with Valentini fails to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness because the combination of these references fails to disclose each and every one of the limitations of claims 63 and 65-76. Specifically, neither Helfet nor Valentini disclose a lining mounted to at least one of the stabilizing post and an inner surface of the femoral component at least partially defining the prosthetic intercondylar channel to, at least temporarily, supplement periarticular stability between the stabilizing post and the prosthetic intercondylar channel, the lining being comprised of a lining material selected from the group consisting of a biologic material, a biologically reabsorbable material, and a combination of biologic and biologically reabsorbable materials. Thus, on this ground alone, the rejection of claims 63 and 65-76 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Helfet in combination with Valentini is untenable.

Second, the prior art method of operation of Valentini contradicts the alleged suggestion or motivation to modify Helfet. M.P.E.P. § 2143.02 provides in relevant part:

> If the proposed modification or combination of the prior art would change the principle of operation of the prior art invention being modified, then the teachings of the references are not sufficient to render the claims *prima facie* obvious. *In re Ratti*, 270 F.2d 810 (C.C.P.A. 1959).

The Office action alleges on page 3 that the motivation to combine Valentini with Helfet is:

> [I]t would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have substituted the synthetic resin material of

> Helfet with a biologic material, since it has been held to be within the general skill of a worker in the art to select a known material on the basis of its suitability for the intended use, herein biocompatibility, as a matter of obvious design choice.

But the *intended use* of the synthetic resin 19 of Helfet is not biocompatibility, as biocompatibility is not a use.

The *intended use* of the synthetic resin of Helfet is to provide a "low friction" platform 19 upon which the condyles 22, 24 slide upon (See Col. 4, ll. 12-48). "If proposed modification would render the prior art invention being modified unsatisfactory for its intended purpose, then there is no suggestion or motivation to make the proposed modification." M.P.E.P. § 2143.01, Section V, citing *In re Gordon*, 733 F.2d 900 (Fed. Cir. 1984). In this case, the low friction platform 19 of Helfet is not intended to be eroded and replaced by the metal base 18, which is exactly what would happen if a biodegradable material of Valentini is used in lieu of the low friction plastic. If the plastic platform 19 were quickly eroded, the condyles 22, 24 (which are metal) would ride upon the metal base 18. This adverse situation is exactly the reason that Helfet requires one of the two replacement components to be plastic, and the opposite component be metal in order to avoid metal-on-metal contact. In other words, the alleged combination renders Helfet unfit for its intended purpose. Thus, the recited rationale in the Office action for combining the references is conclusively rebutted by their very disclosures and by identification of the proper intended use. On this ground alone, the rejection of claims 63 and 65-76 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is untenable.

Finally, a reasonable expectation of success is clearly absent, particularly in light of what would necessarily result (metal-on-metal contact between prosthetic components) from replacing the polymer of Helfet with the bioabsorbable material of Valentini. Moreover, Valetini advocates conversion of the biodegradable material to bone tissue, something not advantageous in between prosthetic components of a functioning joint. Thus, no reasonable expectation of success is present. On this ground alone, the rejection of claims 63 and 65-76 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is untenable. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejection of record for claims 63 and 65-76 are respectfully requested.

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Claim Amendments

Claims 1, 7, 8, 10, 17, 23, 29, 30, 41, 47, 48, 50, 57, 63, 67, 68, and 105 have been amended to omit the "adapted" language from the claims. Other minor amendments have been made that do not affect the scope of subject matter claimed.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant acknowledges the determination that claims 42-44 and 64 are allowable. In light of the grounds of rejection recited in the Office action and the due consideration the Examiner will give to Applicant's traversal of these grounds of rejection, Applicant has refrained from prematurely rewriting these claims in independent form.

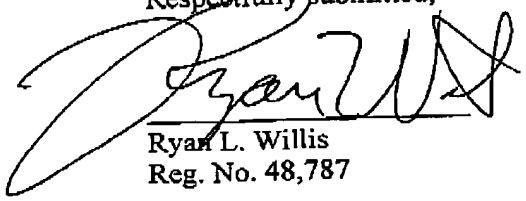
Conclusion

In light of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1-76 and 105, now pending and elected, are patentably distinct from the references cited and are in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of record are respectfully requested.

The Commissioner for Patents is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees that may be required by this paper, or to credit any overpayment to Deposit Account 50-3072.

In the event that the Examiner wishes to discuss any aspect of this response, please contact the undersigned at the telephone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,



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